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ABSTRACT

This competency-based preservice home economics teacher education module on life styles and the consumer is the first in a set of four core curriculum modules on consumer approach to homemaking education. (This set is part of a larger series of sixty-seven modules on the Management Approach to Teaching Consumer and Homemaking Education [MATCHE]--see CE 019 901-967.) Following the module objective and overview, three units of instruction are presented: (1) components of life styles; (2) effects of values and goals on life styles; and (3) developing a life style. Each unit includes the following elements: objective, overview, narrative summary, and suggested activities. A list of suggested resources (readings) for the entire module is also included. A module pre/posttest (with answer key) concludes the document. (Workshop proceedings relating to the development of these modules are available in the ERIC system as CE 019 896-899; also available is a module on utilizing FHA-HERO as an instructional strategy to expand and strengthen the home economics instructional programs [CE 019 900].) (JH)

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CONSUMER APPROACH STRAND:

CORE

MODULE I-A-1 LIFE STYLES AND THE CONSUMER

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1978

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MATCHE

Management Approach to Teaching Consumer and Homemaking Education

MATCHE is an individualized, competency-based preservice curriculum designed for home economics education students at the preprofessional, upper division level. MATCHE is a comprehensive curriculum based on selected objectives which give emphases in three areas: 1) consumer approach to homemaking education, 2) teaching home economics in economically depressed areas, and 3) establishing occupational programs related to home economics. The material for each subject matter area of home economics has been organized into these three strands, and includes an FHA-HERO emphasis. These subject matter areas are home economics education core, housing, foods and nutrition, textiles and clothing, human development, and management.

The MATCHE modules were written by subject matter specialists from various colleges and universities offering home economics and therefore each is unique in the approach used for the development of the objectives. The modules allow for differences in level of achievement, rate of learning, and learning goals. They may be used independently, combined into a sequential series, or as a random set of conceptual units. Any instructor using the material can easily adapt the material to a specific group of students, the locale, method of instruction, and available facilities. Learning may be facilitated by offering one module in conjunction with others.

As MATCHE is continuously up-dated by those using the curriculum, some concepts and objectives may be added and others deleted. The purpose is to continually strengthen the program for pre and inservice home economics teachers.

Guidelines for Use and Continuous Development of MATCHE are on file with Home Economics units in each of the fifty state departments of education plus all of the Home Economics Departments in California institutions offering home economics education. This booklet and proceedings from the four MATCHE workshops give background information concerning the purpose and development of the MATCHE project.

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The project was developed under a contract with the Bureau of Homemaking Education, California State Department of Education under the provisions of PL 90-576 and PL 94-482. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Bureau of Homemaking Education or the U. S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

MATCHE PROJECT

1974-1978

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LIFE STYLES AND THE CONSUMER

Module Objective

The MATCHE student will be able to analyze his or her life style and the life styles of the pupils whom he or she may encounter in a homemaking class, and will be able to compare his or her life style with theirs, identifying similarities and differences in their patterns of living. The student will demonstrate an acceptance or appreciation of diverse life styles. The students will be able to analyze the elements of society that affect consumer practices and that are reflected in life styles.

Module Overview

By accepting the challenge of learning how to be more effective with your pupils, their needs, wants, interests, and aspirations, and their concerns, you will touch upon major components of life styles.

Equipped with an understanding of human behavior as it applies to the selection and use of goods and services to create a satisfying life, you will be prepared to engage in experiences which will help you attain the competency to make consumer and homemaking classes relevant and meaningful to your pupils.

To help you gain the competency to translate what you know and what you will learn into the framework of life styles, this module has been divided into the following units.

Unit 1: Components of Life Styles

Unit 2: Effects of Values and Goals on Life Styles

Unit 3: Developing a Life Style

UNIT 1

COMPONENTS OF LIFE STYLES

Objective

The MATCHE student will be able to demonstrate comprehension of the personal factors which comprise life styles by giving verbal examples of beliefs, aspirations, cultural and ethnic background, and family structure.

The MATCHE student will be able to identify and explain which elements of the environment influence the life styles of individuals, including ecological concerns, roles of men and women, changes in family structure, the effect of the mass media and technological developments.

Overview

An analytical look at the way people live reveals that the patterns of their lives are determined by specific factors, each with particular characteristics. All persons consider some things to be more important than other things. They place a value on them, and their activities and interests are concentrated most often on what they value. Most individuals have been raised in a way that has exposed them to the activities and interests of others. Their families had particular ways of doing things, and so they often do the same things in the same way. The way by which parents earn a living determines the amount of income which is used to provide the means by which individuals live, and often, in turn, determines what they can and cannot have or do.

If you can identify these factors, you will be able to more accurately assess the particular skills and concepts which will help individuals to do the same for themselves.

Narrative Summary

Society in the United States displays a wide diversity of life styles, and such factors as age, sex, ethnicity, religion, occupation, geographic location, health, education, marital status, and composition of the family all contribute to this diversity. Life style is a group phenomenon, for few persons have an individualistic pattern of behavior but are influenced by participation in significant social groups. "Life style" does imply a central core of interests, but specific interests may change dependent upon constraints of economics, time, and energy pressures. (Occupational concerns may have to take precedence over recreational desires. Health problems may overshadow all their interests.)

Economics plays an important role in determining a person's life style. Such major events in a person's life as unemployment, increase in family size, retirement, marriage, divorce and health problems affect life styles. Unusually high costs for housing, education or transportation are other elements determining life style.

What is happening in society at large also modifies the life style of an individual. Wars, energy shortage, alterations in morality standards, changes in attitudes toward women and minorities, and indignation about pollution are some of the societal issues which are affecting the life styles of individuals and families.

Suggested Activities

Do two of the following activities:

1. Reflect on the two life styles portrayed below. One is the childhood of a person fifty years ago, and the other one is of a person twenty-five years ago. Note the changes in life styles, and the factors influencing life style which remain the same.

FACTORS	INFLUENCES
Father or Father substitute's occupation -- 1925	Dad ran his own garage and he worked long hours but the income was irregular because people didn't pay their bills. He also gambled and lost what he earned sometimes.
-- 1950	Dad was a carpenter and when work was good, we had money. During the winter months he sometimes did not work, so money was scarce then. He always stopped after work for beer. We never knew when he'd get home or in what condition.
Mother or mother substitute's occupation -- 1925	Mother worked for only two years by preparing food at home for a farmers' market outlet.
-- 1950	My stepmother worked as a waitress, especially when Dad was out of work. Dad said Mother was too friendly to the men, and they had big fights over it.
Family composition -- 1925	Besides my parents, I had a sister three years older than me. My grandfather came to live with us when I was twelve, and he put a damper on family spontaneity.
-- 1950	My sister, who was three years older, and I were Dad's kids, and then my stepmother's son, who was ten lived with us. He was a "brat" but could do no wrong in Mother's eyes.

Education	-- 1925	Dad didn't graduate from high school, but Mother did.
	-- 1950	Dad graduated from high school, and my mother, who died, had two years of college.
Religion	-- 1925	Mother took us to church with her, but Dad worked every Sunday.
	-- 1950	All but Dad went to mass every Sunday.
Ethnic Group	-- 1925	I was not aware of any particular ethnic group background.
	-- 1950	We came from a Polish background.
Geographic location	-- 1925	We lived in a small town in the Midwest; Mother raised a garden and canned things from it.
	-- 1950	We lived in a blue collar area of a large city among other Polish families. We had a small house.
Use of credit	-- 1925	We paid cash for household items, but Dad had to use credit for his business.
	--1950	We put things on layaway and bought a car on payments, but otherwise we paid cash.
Aspiration of family members	-- 1925	Mother wanted us to be well educated, and she even had library books mailed out from a city library. Dad wanted to provide well for his family. They both wanted to own a home, which they were able to do with a down payment made with money Mother inherited.
	-- 1950	My stepmother wanted her son to be a truckdriver, for she knew they made a great deal of money and he seemed to be mechanical. She and Dad wanted us to get married and leave home.
Strong beliefs of family members	-- 1925	Dad stressed honesty above everything else, and he practiced it with his customers. We were told never to cheat at school, and that doing our best was fine with our parents.
	-- 1950	Dad stressed respect for parents and relatives. We were told to work hard and do our best.
Major events that changed life style of family	-- 1925	Dad sold his business because of the Depression, and we moved to the city, where he had a job as a foreman at a large automobile agency. Those were the good years when we had things fairly good financially. Dad went into business for himself again in the city, and then things were uncertain once more.

-- 1950 Dad was hurt on the job and had to collect compensation for a year. He always had back difficulties thereafter which made him disagreeable. My stepmother was tougher than ever on us.

What factors influenced the life styles of these two families?

Compare your family or own life style with the two case studies above and decide what factors influenced your life style most.

2. Select a reading that portrays a life style most dissimilar to your own and decide which factors seem to have had the most influence on that group of individuals.

3. View the film Free to Choose and, working in small groups, discuss it with your peers. (Film available from Bureau of Homemaking Education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento.)

If there are no further assignments, proceed to Unit 2.

UNIT 2

EFFECTS OF VALUES AND GOALS ON LIFE STYLES

Objective

The MATCHE student will be able to identify and explain three examples of the effect that values and goals have on life styles (at least one example will be from a particular cultural group).

Overview

Values and goals greatly affect one's life style. A person's values and goals determine his interests, activities, and customs. These in turn reflect his life style. Life styles of families and individuals reflect their differences in values, ways of solving problems, and achieving goals.

Values held are often unconsciously absorbed from the family environments and the cultural groups with which the person regularly associates.

Narrative Summary

Consciously or unconsciously, an individual's actions are governed by the strong beliefs or values she or he holds. Rath (1966) believes a value must be freely chosen; that a choice must be made between alternatives; that an individual must give it much thought, be pleased with the choice, and let his/her behavior reflect the value.

The development of values is a personal and life-long process. Some values are absolute ones which remain, independent of surrounding conditions, while some are relative and are subject to change as conditions change.

Our life style is affected by our value system, the clothes we wear, where we live, the food we eat, and what we do with our time. Our goals also emerge from our values.

Suggested Activities

Choose two of the four activities listed below.

1. Visit three types of business establishments in your geographic area which sell clothing. Select one which has high fashion items (e.g., a specialty shop in an exclusive neighborhood). Choose another which features moderately-priced clothing. a discount store or an establishment which has low-cost items. Pay close attention to the customers shopping and record inconspicuously or later from memory the questions asked and the comments made by the customers to the clerk or to those accompanying the customers.

After studying your recorded notes, try to determine what values were portrayed in each type of establishment, both from the decor of the store and the comments made. Some clothing values you might have noticed were personal identity, approval, comfort, convenience, economy, fashion status, or aesthetics. Were any goals verbalized? If so, what ones?

Did any particular cultural groups seem to reflect certain values over other groups?

2. Interview two persons belonging to a cultural group different from yours and ask them what particular wedding customs they observe in their particular cultural group. How important are such customs to them? (If they prize them highly, they are part of their value system.)

3. Interview a real estate salesman and ask him or her to relate what factors in a home are important to customers. Also ask him or her to cite any different cultural differences concerning what is desired in housing.

If there are no further assignments, proceed to Unit 3.

UNIT 3

DEVELOPING A LIFE STYLE

Objective

The MATCHE student will be able to identify and describe the types of resources used and how they are used by individuals and families to develop a life style.

The MATCHE student will be able to identify and describe factors which act as constraints to the achievement of a desired life style by individuals and families, and suggest alternative ways by which a desired life style might be achieved.

The MATCHE student will be able to analyze the elements of society that affect consumer practices of individuals having different life styles.

Overview

The extent to which individuals and families maintain their way of life or achieve the life style to which they aspire may be affected by what they have the capacity to do, the goods and services that are available, and their purchasing power. Individuals and families differ in their demands and the availability of these resources.

Before you can effectively guide your pupils in developing desired life styles, you must learn how life styles are achieved. This also requires learning about the constraints that might hinder the creation of a desired life style.

Narrative Summary

Individuals and families use resources differently to develop a particular life style. Some families who have scarce resources use their time and energy rather than money to achieve a desired life style. Even though an individual or family may have acquired financial resources, having thrift as a high value may still lead them to "make do" with what they have. Others value "self gratification" at such a high level that they must have everything they want in spite of possible adverse consequences.

Economic conditions, the stage of the life cycle, regularity and security of employment, the individual's value system and cultural or ethic ties are some constraints which impede the achievement of a desired life style.

Educated individuals are more likely to find alternative ways of achieving a life style for they are more acquainted with the multitude of community resources which can be used to benefit the individual or his or her family.

Suggested Activities

Do both activities.

1. Answer these questions. After you have completed the answers, ask the questions of another person.

   a. Would you be willing to look through the dumpsters in back of grocery stores to find food that can be eaten? If you would, what would be the conditions under which you would consider doing it? If you would not, why not?

   b. Are you willing to spend two hours in the library looking through resources in order to save three dollars? If not, why not?

   c. Would you be willing to take a job on the other side of the United States that you heard about through the employment service? If not, why not?

   d. If you had the opportunity to attend a prestigious private university because of receiving a scholarship, would you consider changing schools? If not, why not? If you would consider changing, under what conditions would you change?

   e. If you could swim in a private pool in your neighborhood rather than in the public pool in the park close by, which would you choose? Why?

After studying the answers, determine what constraints you and the other person are putting on yourselves in using available resources. If there are constraints, how will they affect life style?

Now consider the following questions:

   f. Your neighbor has so much trash and garbage in his or her yard that you are ashamed of the neighborhood. What do you think that you might do about the problem?

   g. A real estate company wishes to build a development with an artificial lake and golf course in your neighborhood. Ecologists say that the project will consume too much water; the consent of landowners within a ten-mile radius is being solicited. Would you give your permission for the project? Why, or why not?

   h. The city will not give the police personnel the 16 percent raise they requested. Do you believe that they should strike for higher pay? Why, or why not?

   i. Do you believe that individuals shall purchase all they want and can afford in the way of large automobiles, boats, electrical appliances, and other luxury items? Why, or why not?

Again, read your answers and determine which are concerned with formal constraints imposed by society and which imply informal constraints that are societal constraints that are not well established. How do societal constraints affect life styles?

2. A person wishes to go to a community college which is approximately twenty-five miles away but does not own an automobile. Public transportation is available, but the closest bus stop is five miles from home. At present the person has a job in a supermarket paying $110 per week. She or he can go part time if she or he goes to school She or he has decided that in order to attend college she or he has certain alternatives open:

   a. Work days, use part of the money to purchase a second-hand car, and take night classes.

   b. Find a part-time job and live in a room near the college or share an apartment with someone else. His or her parents are willing to give a small amount monthly to help with food costs and fees.

   Can you suggest any other ways in which the prospective college student could solve the problem?

MODULE POSTTEST

After you have completed this unit, you should be ready to take the Module Posttest. See your instructor.

Suggested Resources

Feldman, Saul D., and Gerald W. Thublar. Life Styles: Diversity in American Society. New York: Little, Brown, 1972.

Gomberg, William, and Arthur B. Shostak. Blue Collar World. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

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Herzog, Elizabeth. About the Poor. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Goverument Printing Office, 1968.

Howe, Leland W., and Mary Martha Howe. Personalizing Education. New York: Hart Publishing, 1975.

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Marden, Charles, and Gladys Mayer. Minorities in American Society. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972.

Simon Sidney; Leland W. Howe; Howard Kirschenbaum. Values Clarification. New York: Hart Publishing, 1972.

Stephens, William N. The Family in Cross-Cultural Perspective. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.

Strumpel, Burkhard. Economic Life Styles, Values and Subjective Welfare: An Empirical Approach. Proceedings of a conference on Social Structure, Family Life Styles, and Economic Behavior, sponsored by Life Insurance. Williamsburg, Virginia: January, 1972.

Raths, Louis E.; Merrill Harmin; Sidney B. Simon. Values and Teaching. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1966.

Toffler, Alvin. Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970.

MODULE PRE/POSTTEST

Student_____

Life Styles and the Consumer

Instructor_____

Date_____

Student: This pre/posttest will assess your knowledge of the information presented in this module. You need study only those units that are prescribed on the basis of pretest results.

1. Choose four of the factors listed below and indicate how they influence a person's life style.

age	health
sex	education
ethnicity	marital status
religion	attitude toward individualism
occupation	family composition
geographic location	

2. Contrast in at least two ways how your life style differs from that of another individual who belongs to a different socioeconomic, ethnic, or cultural group than you do.

   a.

   b.

3. Cite one example of a status symbol from the low-income group, middle-class group, and upper-income group. Explain why you believe that the examples you give are status symbols.

4. Name and explain three constraints which may cause an individual difficulties in achieving a desired life style.

a.

b.

c.

d.

Return this test to your instructor for evaluation.

ANSWER KEY
MODULE PRE/POSTTEST

Life Styles and the Consumer

Instructor:	Do not reproduce this page in students' booklets. You must retain it for grading and prescriptive purposes. Answers will vary with individuals. A preferred response might be similar to the answer presented.

1. Middle-aged persons and senior citizens have, for the most part, achieved the standard of living which is compatible with their goals or they have lowered their goals to fit reality. Often with older age groups it is a matter of maintaining the same level of life style. Many young persons, however, are just beginning to establish a life style; thus it is often more simple than it will be at a later time. Because very young persons usually find it difficult to obtain credit and just beginning to work, their life styles are not very elaborate unless other economic resources are available.

   Even though sex discrimination is lessening, women are still expected to follow conventional ways more than men are. There are some very individualistic women, however, who set their life style to suit themselves rather than follow the mores of society.

   Health is an important factor in influencing a life style. Severe health problems of any family member cause medical bills to soar so that income is limited for other areas of living. Also, the emotional and physical drain on family members limits time and energy left for other activities.

   Even though rural areas are less isolated than was the case a few years ago, a rural area does not provide the opportunities for cultural, educational, and economic opportunities that a city does. Living in a rural area necessitates having a sound automobile because a major portion of the shopping must be done in an urban area or at a distance from home.

   Large families usually have less discretionary income than do small families; thus the life style is usually more simple when the family composition is large in number. Having small children also usually limits activities of the adults in the family.

   Certain religious sects put restrictions on its members; therefore, a person's religion helps set the life style of that individual.

   The occupation of my husband forces us to confine our socialization to the weekends. A family near us socializes frequently during the week because the husband has flexible hours. This same family spends a great deal of time at church, which makes up most of their social life, while my family members are not regular in church attendance.

Answer Key (continued)

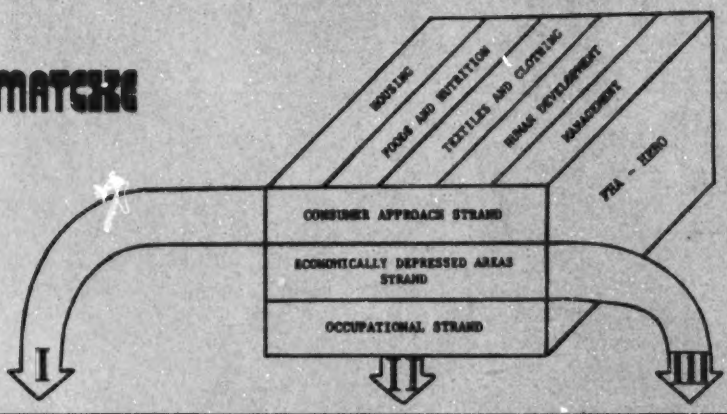
A status symbol for the lower-class person is a large automobile or expensive baby items which are very conspicuous and tell others that this person has been successful.

Since the middle class puts a great deal of emphasis on security, a status symbol for a person in this class is a bank account. Also a nice home is important for it, too, represents stability.

3. Upper-class individuals view a home in an exclusive neighborhood, membership in a well established city or country club, and high fashion clothing as status symbols, probably because they are very expensive symbols.

4. Economic conditions
Regularity and security of employment
Individual's value system
Health
Cultural and ethnic ties
Energy level and time available
Abilities

MATRIX



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B.	HOUSING 1 Consumer Use of the Community 2 Procedures for Selecting a Community 3 Procedures for Selecting Housing 4 Shopping for a Home Loan 5 Procedures for Selecting Furnishings 6 Maintenance Procedures for Surfaces, Furniture, and Appliances	HOUSING 1 Occupational Opportunities Related to Housing and Interiors 2 Required Skills for Retail Sales of Furnishings and Related Household Items	HOUSING 1 Low Income Housing 2 Government Housing Programs 3 Low Income Furnishings
C.	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Technological, Sociological, Ecological, and Environmental Factors Related to Food 2 Regulatory Agencies Responsible for Wholesomeness and Quality of Foods 3 Consumer Aspects in Planning Meals 4 Cultural Food Patterns 5 Influences on Food Prices	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Occupational Opportunities Related Foods and Nutrition 2 Operations and Activities of a Food Service Operation 3 Managing a Food Service Operation	FOODS AND NUTRITION 1 Food Availability in Economically Depressed Areas 2 Low Income Food Patterns 3 Meal Management on a Low Income
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